

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

had a lofty conception of his duties. He was a hard worker, as is fully recognized by Lavissee, the best authority on the reign. He was indeed much more than a lover of war and women, for he held all the threads of government firmly in his hands. He realized how much was rightly expected of a powerful autocrat and is prodigal of advice to his heir. Here are a few of the royal maxims. " It is essential for princes to master their resentments. . . . In thinking how to injure someone who has troubled us we may injure, ourselves. For the vain satisfaction of giving rein to our anger we often sacrifice the opportunity of securing solid advantages. Exercising a God-given function we must appear incapable of the agitations which might lower the standard. . . . If it is true that our heart, knowing its frailty, is conscious of the emotions of the common herd, our reason ought at least to conceal them directly they injure the public good for which alone we are born. . . . A King must firmly hold the balance between the many people who try to tilt it to their side. So many pay court to us for personal reasons under specious phrases. You cannot' satisfy every one. Do not judge the equity of the claim by the vigour with which it is pressed, either by the petitioners themselves or their backers. The result of the decision is more important than the merits of the claimant. The greatest king would soon ruin himself if he granted everything to deserving people. Those of our rank are never pardoned, and therefore we must weigh our words... Kings are absolute lords and have full disposition of all property, secular and ecclesiastical; use them according to the needs of the state. . . . Never hurry. Take long views. The King must know everything. Empires are only preserved by the same means as they are created, namely vigour, vigilance,

and work."

The Memoirs of 1667 are less full and important than those of the preceding year, but they contain an interesting passage which was omitted from the final version. Princes, he reflects, live in glass houses. "Vous devez conclure, mon fils, qu'un souverain ne sauroit mener une vie trop sage et trop innocente; que pour régner heureusement et glorieusement, ce n'est pas assez de donner ordre aux affaires générales si nous ne réglons aussi nos propres mœurs." He had had a daughter by Mile La Valliere and felt it right to recognize the child by the grant of a title to the mother. "I could have passed over this attachment as a bad example; but after drawing lessons from